

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 4603

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, PORG, ET, SO
SUBJECT: ETHIOPIAN-SOMALIA OAU MEDIATION COMMITTEE TO CONVENE
IN LIBREVILLE

REF: ADDIS ABABA 4549

1. IN CONTEXT REMARKS REFTTEL, OAU ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL PETER ONU SPECULATED ON POTENTIAL COURSE UPCOMING ETHIOPIAN-SOMALI MEDIATION COMMITTEE DELIVERATIONS IN LIBREVILLE. ALTHOUGH ETHIOPIA WILL ATTEND ENTHUSIASTICALLY AND SOMALIA LESS SO, SOMALIA IS EXPECTED TO ATTEND, IF ONLY TO PRESENT ITS SIDE OF CASE. ONU STATED THAT ETHIOPIA CONSIDERS CUREENT CONFLICT A BORDER DISPUTE VICE SOMALI VIEW OF IT AS TERRITORIAL DISPUTE. ONU OBSERVED THAT "BORDER ADJUSTMENTS CAN BE ENVISAGED IF THERE IS AMBIGUITY REGARDING LOCATION OF COLONIAL BORDERS," BUT OAU CHARTER CONCEPT OF INVIOABILITY OF BORDERS APPLIES TO "LARGE CHUNKS OF TERRITORY," SINCE THIS IS WHAT SOMALIA SEEKS, ONU DOES NOT BELIEVE ANY OAU MEMBER (EVEN EGYPT
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OR OTHER ARAB STATES) WILL SUPPORT SOMALIA'S POSITION.

2. ONU ALSO SAID THAT THE OAU WOULD UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES RECOGNIZE GUERILLAS FIGHTING IN AN INDEPENDENT BLACK AFRICAN COUNTRY AS A "LIBERATION MOVEMENT." THEREFORE, WESTERN SOMALIA LIBERATION FRONT (WSLF)

WILL NEVER BE RECOGNIZED AS LEGITIMATE LIBERATION MOVEMENT BY OAU. ON OTHER HAND, ONU STATED THAT OAU WOULD REQUIRE POSITIVE PROOF TO BACK UP ETHIOPIAN CLAIMS THAT SOMALI REGULARS ARE FIGHTING IN OGADEN.

3. ONU COMMENTED THAT POSSIBLE SOLUTION WOULD BE TO REVIVE THE IDEA OF AN OAU PEACEKEEPING FORCE TO PATROL OGADEN. THIS OPTION WAS FIRST DISCUSSED IN 1974, BUT TO BE EFFECTIVE FORCE WOULD HAVE TO BE ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH SIDES. ALTHOUGH ONU RAISED QUESTION OF U.S. ARMS SALES TO SOAMALIA, HE INDICATED THAT THE LIBRE-VILLE MEDIATION COMMITTEES WOULD NOT ADDRESS MATTER OF OUTSIDE ARMS SUPPLIERS OR FOREIGN FORCES, ALTHOUGH EITHER PARTY TO DISPUTE MAY WELL DO SO.

4. COMMENT: ONU'S COMMENTS INDICATED DEEP OAU CONCERN WITH BURGEONING ETHIOPIAN-SOMALI CONFLICT, BUT WHEN PRESSED HE WAS UNABLE TO OFFER SPECIFIC SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEM. OAU APPARENTLY VIEWS MATTER AS ONE TO BE SOLVED BY MEDIATION, IF NOT AT FOREIGN MINISTER LEVEL, THEN BY HEADS OF STATE. THERE IS NO INCLINATION TO IMPOSE A SOLUTION ON THE COMBATANTS VIA PEACEKEEPING FORCE OR OTHER SANCTIONS. ONU DID IMPLY, HOWEVER, THAT IF ETHIOPIA COULD PROVE ITS CASE THAT SOMALIA WAS AGGRESSOR, PUBLIC OAU CONDEMNATION OF SOMALIA WAS POSSIBLE. AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC REPS IN ADDIS AGREE THAT SOMALIA WILL ATTEND MEETING, BUT

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THEY ARE ALSO PERSUADED SOMALI LINE WILL BE THAT OGADEN PROBLEM IS PURELY ETHIOPIAN PROBLEM OF HOW TO COPE WITH WSLF AND DOES NOT INVOLVE SOMALIA. TIENKEN

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